tomorrow. So, come prepared for it. It will be listed in the business. Now, please make the statement, or you can lay the Statement.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Let him read out, Madam.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay.

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## STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER

### Third Ministerial Conference of WTO at Seattle, U.S.A.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): As hon. Members are aware, the Third Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation was held at Seattle from 30th November to 3rd December, 1999. This Conference assumed importance and attracted wide publicity and attention because of the efforts by a significant number of member countries to seek an endorsement from this Conference for the proposal to launch a comprehensive round of negotiations covering a wide range of subjects including proposal to link trade with labour issues through this Conference.

The Indian delegation was led by me. I had the privilege of having Hon'ble Members of Parliament, Shri Biplab Dasgupta, Shri Kamal Nath and Shri K. Yerrannaidu in the delegation. There were many demonstrations before and during the period of Conference by several interest groups. In fact the inaugural function scheduled for the forenoon of 30th November, 1999, had to be abandoned. However, under police protection, the Plenary Session began in the afternoon of 30th November, 1999 and I made our country statement in the Plenary Session on the evening of 30th November, 1999.

As part of the consultation process, meetings of SAARC at the official level and G-15 members at the Ministerial level were held. On the margins of the Ministerial Conference, I held a number of bilateral meetings with the leaders of many delegations, including those of European Commission, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Sweden, Colombia, South Africa, Japan, China, Nepal and Bhutan.

As part of the Conference process, working groups were formed to discuss in depth the various subjects including agriculture, market access,

implementation and other issues and arrive at consensus-based recommendations relating to negotiating mandate or decisions as the case may be. We participated effectively in the deliberations of all the groups and articulated our position on various issues. We effectively opposed the inclusion of non-trade issues like labour standards in the agenda of the WTO. This was fully in line with the Prime Minister's statement made in Lok Sabha on 1/12/99.

As no consensus-based conclusion could be reached on most of the issues before the Ministerial Conference, no declaration was finalized and issued. In the light of this, the work of the Ministerial Conference has been suspended. The Chairperson in her statement in the closing Plenary session indicated that the Director General, WTO, will hold consultations with Member countries and make a proposal for resuming the work of the Ministerial Conference. The Chairperson also stated: "During this time, the Director General can consult with delegations and discuss creative ways in which we might bridge the remaining areas in which consensus does not yet exist, develop an improved process which is both, efficient and fully inclusive, and prepare the way for successful conclusion. The Ministerial will then resume its work."

It is, however, expected that the mandated negotiations under the provisions of the Agreement on Agriculture and the General Agreement on Trade in Services, will take place as scheduled with effect from 1.1.2000. The mandated reviews under the various WTO Agreements, are also expected to be undertaken as per the time schedule provided under the respective WTO agreements.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bilpab, that is why I wanted you to stay here and listen to what I was saying. In view of the fact that many Members including Shri Pranab Mukherjee and the Leader of the Opposition met the Chairman and said, "Let the *suo motu* statement be made, but we would like to have a full-fledged discussion; as time is available tomorrow, we will have a full-fledged discussion of two-and-a-half hours". Of course, you were there. So you know everything.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Madam, he would respond. He cannot speak.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He will have to support him. Now I adjourn the House till 11 o'clock tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at two minutes past six of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, the 9th December, 1999.